# List of matrilineal or matrilocal societies



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*Not to be confused with Matriarchy.*

The following list includes societies that have been identified as matrilineal or matrilocal in ethnographic literature.

"Matrilineal" means kinship is passed down through the maternal line.[1]

The Akans of Ghana, West Africa, are matrilineal. Akans are the largest ethnic group in Ghana. They are made of the Akyems or Akims, Asantes, Fantis, Akuapims, Kwahus, Denkyiras, Bonos, Akwamus, Krachis, etc.

The Serer people of Senegal, Gambia, and Mauritania are bilineal, but matrilineality (*tiim*, in Serer) is very important in their culture, and is well preserved.[2][3] There are a multitude of Serer maternal clans with their various history and origins.

"Matrilocal" means new families are established in proximity to the brides' extended family of origin, not that of the groom.

Note: *separate* in the marriage column refers to the practice of husbands and wives living in separate locations, often informally called *walking marriages*. See the articles for the specific cultures that practice this for further description.

Part of a series on the
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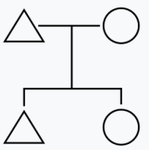

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| Group name | Continent | Country / Region | Marriage | Lineage | Reference | (c. year) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Akan | Africa | Ghana | Both | Matrilineal | Meyer Fortes[4] | 1950 |
| Alor | Asia | Indonesia | | | Cora Du Bois | 1944 |
| Nso | Africa | Cameroon | Patrilocal | Only Kom Matrilineal | Phyllis Kaberry | 1952 |
| Batek | Asia | Malaysia | Patrilocal | | Kirk Michael Endicott | 1974 |
| Bijagós | Africa | Guinea-Bissau | | Matrilineal | Luigi Scantarburlo | 1978 |
| Billava | Asia | India | Patrilocal | Matrilineal | | |
| Bontoc | Asia | Philippines | | | Albert Jenks<br>Albert Bacdayan | 1905<br>1974 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Boyowan | Australasia | Trobriand Islands, Papua New Guinea | Patrilocal | Matrilineal | Bronisław Malinowski | 1916 |
| Bribri | North America | Costa Rica | Matrilocal | Matrilineal | William More Gabb | 1875 |
| Bunt | Asia | India | Patrilocal | Matrilineal | E Kathleen Gough | 1954 |
| Chamorro | Oceania | Guam and Mariana Islands | | Matrilineal | Guampedia | |
| Cherokee | North America | United States | Matrilocal | Matrilineal | | |
| Chickasaw | North America | United States | | Matrilineal | | |
| Choctaw | North America | United States | | Matrilineal | | |
| Danes | Europe | Læsø | Matrilocal | Matrilineal[5] | Bjarne Stoklund[6] | 1700-1900 |
| Chambri | Australasia | Papua New Guinea | | | Margaret Mead | 1935 |
| Nairs | Asia | India | Both | Matrilineal | | |
| Fore | Australasia | Papua New Guinea | | | Shirley Glasse (Lindenbaum) | 1963 |
| Garo | Asia | India, Bangladesh | Matrilocal | Matrilineal | | |
| Gitxsan | North America | Canada | | Matrilineal | | |
| Greek | Europe | various islands | Matrilocal | | John Hawkins | to the end of the 18th century AD[7] |
| Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) | North America | United States, Canada | Matrilocal | Matrilineal | Lewis Henry Morgan | 1901 |
| Hopi | North America | United States | Matrilocal | Matrilineal | Barbara Freire-Marreco | 1914 |
| Huaorani [*citation needed*] | South America | Ecuador | | | John Man [*citation needed*] | 1982 [*citation needed*] |
| Iban | Asia | Borneo | Both | Neither | Edwin H Gomes | 1911 |
| Imazighen | Africa | North Sahara | | | George Peter Murdock | 1959 |
| Jaintia | Asia | India | Matrilocal | Matrilineal | | |
| Jívaro | South America | West Amazon | | | Rafael Karsten | 1926 |
| Jews in the Kibbutzim | Asia | Israel | [8] | Matrilineal | Judith Buber Agassi[9] | 1989 |
| Karen | Asia | Burma | Matrilocal | Matrilineal | Harry Ignatius Marshall[10] | 1922 |
| Kerinci | Asia | Indonesia | Matrilocal | Matrilineal | C.W. Watson[11] | 1992 |
| Khasi | Asia | India | Matrilocal | Matrilineal | P. R. T. Gurdon[12] | 1914 |
| Guna people | South America | Panama, Colombia | Matrilocal | | | |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| !Kung San | Africa | Southern Africa | | | Marjorie Shostak | 1976 |
| Lenape (Delaware) | North America | United States of America | Matrilocal | Matrilineal | | |
| Marshallese | Oceania | Marshall Islands | Matrilocal | Matrilineal | | |
| Maliku | Asia | India | Separate | Matrilineal | Ellen Kattner | 1996 |
| Minangkabau | Asia | Indonesia | Separate | Matrilineal | Pieter Johannes Veth | 1882 |
| Mohican | North America | United States | | Matrilineal | | |
| Mosuo/Nakhi | Asia | China | Separate | Matrilineal | Joseph Francis Charles Rock | 1924 |
| Nair | Asia | India | Matrilocal | Matrilineal | E Kathleen Gough | 1954 |
| Navajo | North America | United States | Matrilocal | Matrilineal | | |
| Ngazidja/Grande Comore | Africa | Comoros | Matrilocal | Matrilineal | Paul Guy[13] Martine Gestin, Nicole-Claude Mathieu[14] | 1942 |
| Nubians | Africa | Sudan | | | Ernest Godard | 1867 |
| Ovambo | Africa | Namibia | | Matrilineal | Maija Hiltunen (Tuupainen)[15] | 1970 |
| Seminole | North America | United States | | Matrilineal | | |
| Serer<br>subgroups: Saafi, Ndut, Palor, Laalaa, Noon and Niominka. | Africa | Senegal, Gambia and Mauritania | Patrilocal | Both | Henry Gravrand[16] 1990<br>Charles Becker[17] 1993 | |
| Siraya | Austronesia | Taiwan | Duolocal, uxorilocal | Matrilineal | Shepherd & Candidius | 1995 |
| Tai people | Asia | | Matrilocal | | | |
| Tlingit | North America | United States, and Canada | Matrilocal | Matrilineal | Aurel Krause | 1885 |
| Tiwi | Australasia | Australia | | Matrilineal | | |
| Tsimshian | North America | United States, and Canada | Matrilocal | Matrilineal | | |
| Vanatinai | Australasia | Papua New Guinea | Matrilocal | Matrilineal | Maria Lepowsky | 1981 |
| Wemale | Asia | Indonesia | | | Adolf E Jensen | 1939 |
| Basques | Europe | Spain and France | Matrilocal | Matrilineal | | |
| Chams | Asia | Vietnam, Cambodia | Matrilocal | Matrilineal | [18] | |
| Rhade (Ê Đê) | Asia | Vietnam, Cambodia | Matrilocal | Matrilineal | [19] | |
| Amis | Asia | Taiwan | Matrilocal | Matrilineal | | |
| Han Taiwanese (antiquated, mostly rural) | Asia | Taiwan | Matrilocal | Matrilineal | | [20] |
| Western Apache | North America | United States | Matrilocal | Matrilineal | | |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Akimel O'odham (Pima) | North America | United States | Matrilocal | | | |
| Muscogee | North America | United States | | Matrilineal | | |
| Tsenacommacah (Powhatan confederacy) | North America | United States | | Matrilineal | | |
| Wampanoag | North America | United States | Matrilocal | Matrilineal | | |
| Nipmuc | North America | United States | | Matrilineal | | |
| Jemez Pueblo, New Mexico | North America | United States | | Matrilineal | Paul Kirchhoff[21] | 1954 |
| Keres people | North America | United States | | Matrilineal | Paul Kirchhoff[21] | 1954 |
| Wayuu | South America | Colombia, Venezuela | Matrilocal | Matrilineal | Nina S. de Friedemann [22] | 1982 |
| Zuni | North America | United States | | Matrilineal | Paul Kirchhoff[21] | 1954 |

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3. ^ Gastellu, Jean-Marc, "Petit traité de matrilinarité. L'accumulation dans deux sociétés rurales d'Afrique de l'Ouest", Cahiers ORSTOM, série Sciences Humaines 4 (1985) [in] Gastellu, Jean-Marc, "Matrilineages, Economic Groups and Differentiation in West Africa: A Note", O.R.S.T.O.M. Fonds Documentaire (1988), pp 1, 2-4 (pp 272-4), 7 (p 277)
4. ^ Val'Dman, A. V.; Kozlovskaia, M. M. (1975). "1950 Ashanti Kinship. In A.R. Radcliffe Brown. African systems of Kinship and Marriage. London: Oxford University Press". *Zhurnal Nevropatologii i Psikhiatrii Imeni S.S. Korsakova*. **75** (11): 1710–7. PMID 1950.
5. ^ only in informal everyday language.
6. ^ Gårdene gik i arv på spindesiden. Kvinderne drev landbruget, medens mændene mest tog sig af strandinger og fiskeri og hjalp med pløjning og tærskning.
   *The farms were inherited in the distaff side. The women drive agriculture, while men most took care of shipwrecks and fishing and helped with plowing and threshing.*
   - Stoklund, Bjarne: "Arbejde og kønsroller på Læsø o. 1200-1900" ISBN 87-88683-08-7
   - "Kvindefællesskaber" (Anna Birte Ravn og Marianne Rostgård). ISBN 87-982062-1-4
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8. ^ see Jewish views of marriage
9. ^ Agassi, Judith Buber, (1989) "Theories of Gender Equality: Lessons from the Israeli Kibbutz", Gender and Society, 3/2, 160-186.
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11. ^ C. W. Watson Kinship, Property and Inheritance in Kerinci, Central Sumatra 1992 ISBN 0 904938 19 0
12. ^ The Khasis by P. R. T. Gurdon
13. ^ Guy, Paul (October–December 1942). "Sur une coutume locale de droit musulman de l'Archipel des Comores". *Revue algérienne, tunisienne et marocaine de législation et de jurisprudence* (in French). pp. 78–79.
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17. ^ (in French) Becker, Charles, "Vestiges historiques, témoins matériels du passé dans les pays sereer", Dakar (1993), CNRS - ORS TO M Excerpt (Retrieved: 23 July 2012)
18. ^ Phuong, Tran Ky; Lockhart, Bruce (2011-01-01). *The Cham of Vietnam: History, Society and Art*. NUS Press. ISBN 978-9971-69-459-3.
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21. ^ *a b c* Paul Kirchhoff, "Gatherers and Farmers in the Greater Southwest: A Problem in Classification", American Anthropologist, New Series, Vol. 56, No. 4, Southwest Issue (August 1954), pp. 529–550
22. ^ Friedemann, Nina S. de, Jaime Arocha Rodríguez (1982) “Herederos del jaguar y la anaconda”; pp 289-338 “8. Guajiros: amos de la arrogancia y del cacto”; Carlos Valencia Editores Bogotá ISBN 84-8277-088-8|quote= (…) "los hombres en el acto de procreación contribuyen con su sangre –*asháa*–, a tiempo que las mujeres participan con la carne –*eiruku*–. Los hijos, tanto los varones como las mujeres, heredan la sangre del padre, pero solamente las madres pueden transmitirles la carne y el “apellido”. Así, un guajiro, sea sea hombre o mujer, tiene más relaciones económicas y sociales con la familia materna, sus *parientes de carne*, que con la paterna, sus *parientes de sangre*"
    "The men in the act of procreation contribute with their blood -*asháa*-, while the women participate with their flesh -*eiruku*-. The children, both males and females, inherit the blood of the father, but only the mothers can transmit the flesh and the "surname". Thus, a guajiro, whether male or female, has more economic and social relations with the maternal family, his or her *relatives of flesh*, than with the paternal family, his or her *relatives of blood*."

Categories: Matriarchy | Cultural anthropology | Women in society | Feminism and society

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